UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/121
29 March 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Forty-eighth session
Item 61 of the preliminary list*

CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS

Letter dated 25 March 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith the text of the statement delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria at the ceremony for the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention (see annex) on 14 January 1993.

I should be obliged if you would have this letter, together with the annex hereto, circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 61 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Rabah HADID
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/50.

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ANNEX

Statement delivered at Paris on 14 January 1993 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria at the ceremony for the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction

Algeria has made its modest contribution to the drafting of the Convention today open for signature, the conclusion of which has necessitated considerable efforts on the part of countries of every continent and representing every political and cultural strand and varying levels of economic and social development.

Algeria shares the views of those delegations which have emphasized the historical importance of the Convention. Algeria hopes that the international community, through this Convention, will make a major qualitative advance and cross an important threshold in the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction. This would then represent a truly universal undertaking with the assumption of the same rights, the imposition of the same obligations and the provision of the same guarantees of security for all.

Algeria trusts that the commitments made under the Convention relating to cooperation and assistance to developing countries will not prove to be empty promises.

Certain parties, however, continue to harbour reservations with regard to the Convention because they consider that their legitimate interests have not been adequately reflected. Thus the Arab countries have expressed their fears, doubts and demands, in particular at the 1989 Paris Conference and on the introduction of this Convention to the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-seventh session.

No one can be unaware or deny that in the Middle East one country, and one country alone, possesses an arsenal of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and that this same country is not a party to any international treaty and maintains its refusal to submit its installations to international monitoring.

The Arab countries can neither tolerate nor accept that this situation be skirted in any discussion of security and disarmament issues in any setting or context.

Whether present or not at Paris, the Arab countries unanimously demand at the regional level that the question of weapons of mass destruction should be approached from a comprehensive perspective.

In this context the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States has addressed letters to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic reaffirming the steadfast position of the Arab countries. Algeria expresses its firm and unequivocal support for that initiative.

In particular, Algeria reaffirms its support for resolution No. 5232 of the League of Arab States of September 1992 by which the Council of the League emphasized its support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological or chemical, as the best means of guaranteeing the security of all the countries of the region.